

Miller Canyon Staging Area Planning (FINAL)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Version # _____

APP # 700523

A. Statement of Planning Objectives

The Miller Canyon staging area on the San Bernardino National Forest has never been a "designated" staging area, but was user created from years of OHV enthusiasts parking in an enlarged turnout along Forest Road 2N37. In the past few years, fuel treatments conducted by the forest further opened up vegetation at this site leading to an increased footprint. Anyone visiting the area on a typical weekend can see the need for a staging area in this popular riding location. Miller Canyon is located in a oak-woodland riparian drainage that extends both into yellow pine and chaparral habitat providing a diverse forest experience. Unfortunately, this user created staging site is located adjacent to a riparian area, which does not fit in with our current Land Management Plan and Riparian Species plan. Furthermore, the current site is located on a prehistoric site of cultural importance that appears to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register for Historic Places. We propose to analyze the current site and alternate sites in the near vicinity for a permanent solution that meets Forest Service standards and public need.

Due to extraordinary circumstances found at the present site, it is likely that an alternate site to relocate the current staging area may be an adequate solution, but no decision can be made until the environmental analysis is conducted. We are proposing to conduct public scoping, create an internal review by creating an ID team, and preparing an environmental assessment. We are asking the state to fund salary time to prepare this review and subsequent specialist surveys and documentation.

B. Relation of Proposed Project to OHV Recreation

Miller Canyon sits adjacent to Silverwood State Park on the Mountaintop District of the SBNF and is a popular OHV riding area. On a typical weekend, the current user created site hosts up to twenty vehicles and trailers. The proposed project will provide the legal framework for a permanent solution to OHV staging area needs in Miller Canyon. When analysis is complete, we foresee a designated staging area for this area and current impacts to sensitive resources minimized. This project will enhance the OHV experience in the Miller Canyon area by providing framework for a Forest Service designated staging area. Once a proper site is planned and designated, enhancements can be added, such as tables, toilets, shade structures, etc.

C. Statement of Activities

The SBNF plans to conduct the following activities in analyzing the Miller Canyon Staging Area:

- Internal review of potential alternatives for a Miller Canyon staging area by creating a forest ID team.
- Public scoping and any necessary public meetings
- Specialist surveys and supporting reports required for an environmental assessment including a biological assessment/evaluation (including botany and wildlife), archaeological assessment and report, recreation, air quality, fire risk, soil and water, visual resources, and transportation facilities analysis.
- Consultation with supporting agencies, including, but not limited to: State Parks, County of San Bernardino, USFWS, SHPO
- Produce an Environmental Analysis and Decision Memo with a management plan for Miller Canyon OHV staging needs

D. List of Reports

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is the ultimate goal of this proposal. Supporting documents needed will include:

- project initiation letter
- public record memo
- biological assessment/evaluation

- cultural resources/archaeological report and SHPO consultation
- hydrology/soils report
- recreation analysis
- fire risk assessment
- air quality report
- transportation facilities report
- visual resources

After an EA is produced, a Decision Memo will be written, making the decision about what alternative will be implemented. A management plan for the area should be included with the final decision.

Additional Documentation

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1. Timeline for Completion

Attachments:

[Miller Canyon Staging Area NEPA Timeline](#)

2. Optional Project-Specific Application Documents

Attachments:

[Aerial photo of Miller Canyon and current staging site](#)

3. Optional Project-specific Maps

Attachments:

[Miller Canyon current staging site and proposed alternate site](#)

Project Cost Estimate

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APPLICANT NAME :	USFS - San Bernardino National Forest		
PROJECT TITLE :	Miller Canyon Staging Area Planning (FINAL)	PROJECT NUMBER (Division use only) :	G09-02-14-P02
PROJECT TYPE :	<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition <input type="checkbox"/> Development <input type="checkbox"/> Education & Safety <input type="checkbox"/> Ground Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Restoration		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION :	<p>The Miller Canyon staging area on the San Bernardino National Forest has never been a "designated" staging area, but was user created from years of OHV enthusiasts parking in an enlarged turnout along Forest Road 2N37. In the past few years, fuel treatments conducted by the forest further opened up vegetation at this site leading to an increased footprint. Anyone visiting the area on a typical weekend can see the need for a staging area in this popular riding location. Miller Canyon is located in a oak-woodland riparian drainage that extends both into yellow pine and chaparral habitat providing a diverse forest experience. Unfortunately, this user created staging site is located adjacent to a riparian area, which does not fit in with our current Land Management Plan and Riparian Species plan. Furthermore, the current site is located on a prehistoric site of cultural importance that appears to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register for Historic Places. We propose to analyze the current site and alternate sites in the near vicinity for a permanent solution that meets Forest Service standards and public need.</p> <p>Due to extraordinary circumstances found at the present site, it is likely that an alternate site to relocate the current staging area may be an adequate solution, but no decision can be made until the environmental analysis is conducted. We are proposing to conduct public scoping, create an internal review by creating an ID team, and preparing an environmental assessment. We are asking the state to fund salary time to prepare this review and subsequent specialist surveys and documentation.</p>		

	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
DIRECT EXPENSES							
Program Expenses							
1	Staff						
	Other-Archaeologist/Project Lead	4.000	433.000	DAY	1,732.00	0.00	1,732.00
	Other-Archaeologist	4.000	420.000	DAY	1,680.00	0.00	1,680.00
	Other-Archaeologist	120.000	390.000	DAY	46,800.00	0.00	46,800.00
	Other-Wildlife	10.000	393.000	DAY	3,930.00	0.00	3,930.00
	Other-Wildlife	20.000	350.000	DAY	3,500.00	3,500.00	7,000.00

Project Cost Estimate for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2009/2010
Agency: USFS - San Bernardino National Forest
Application: Miller Canyon Staging Area Planning (FINAL)

3/1/2010

	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
	Other-Botany	10.000	390.000	DAY	3,900.00	0.00	3,900.00
	Other-Botany Tech	20.000	200.000	DAY	2,000.00	2,000.00	4,000.00
	Other-Archaeologist	70.000	273.000	DAY	19,110.00	0.00	19,110.00
	Other-NEPA Coordinator	10.000	266.000	DAY	1,596.00	1,064.00	2,660.00
	Other-Recreation Specialist	15.000	363.000	DAY	3,630.00	1,815.00	5,445.00
	Other-OHV Program Coordinator	10.000	293.000	DAY	2,930.00	0.00	2,930.00
	Other-OHV Technician	10.000	194.000	DAY	0.00	1,940.00	1,940.00
	Other-Engineer	3.000	322.000	DAY	966.00	0.00	966.00
	Other-Fuels Specialist	3.000	355.000	DAY	0.00	1,065.00	1,065.00
	Total for Staff				91,774.00	11,384.00	103,158.00
2	Contracts						
	Other-Fuels Reduction Crew	3.000	5000.000	DAY	0.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
3	Materials / Supplies						
4	Equipment Use Expenses						
	Field Vehicle	3.000	316.000	MOS	0.00	948.00	948.00
5	Equipment Purchases						
6	Others						
7	Indirect Costs						
	Indirect Costs-management and adminitrat	10.000	430.000	DAY	0.00	4,300.00	4,300.00
	Total Program Expenses				91,774.00	31,632.00	123,406.00
	TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES				91,774.00	31,632.00	123,406.00
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES				91,774.00	31,632.00	123,406.00

Project Cost Summary for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2009/2010
Agency: USFS - San Bernardino National Forest
Application: Miller Canyon Staging Area Planning (FINAL)

3/1/2010

	Line Item	Grant Request	Match	Total	Narrative
DIRECT EXPENSES					
Program Expenses					
1	Staff	91,774.00	11,384.00	103,158.00	
2	Contracts	0.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	Fuels Reduction Crew will clear land on proposed alternate staging area site so heritage/cultural surveys can be performed.
3	Materials / Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	
4	Equipment Use Expenses	0.00	948.00	948.00	
5	Equipment Purchases	0.00	0.00	0.00	
6	Others	0.00	0.00	0.00	
7	Indirect Costs	0.00	4,300.00	4,300.00	Management and Administrative Personnel (the District Ranger of the Mountaintop District of the SBNF) who will serve as an ID team leader in this project.
Total Program Expenses		91,774.00	31,632.00	123,406.00	
TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES		91,774.00	31,632.00	123,406.00	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		91,774.00	31,632.00	123,406.00	

Environmental Review Data Sheet (ERDS)

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ITEM 1 and ITEM 2

ITEM 1

- a. ITEM 1 - Has a CEQA Notice of Determination (NOD) been filed for the Project? ☐ Yes ☒ No
(Please select Yes or No)

ITEM 2

- b. Does the proposed Project include a request for funding for CEQA and/or NEPA document preparation prior to implementing the remaining Project Deliverables (i.e., is it a two-phased Project pursuant to Section 4970.06.1(b)) (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No

ITEM 3 - Project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378

- c. ITEM 3 - Are the proposed activities a "Project" under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378? ☐ Yes ☒ No
(Please select Yes or No)
- d. The Application is requesting funds solely for personnel and support to enforce OHV laws and ensure public safety. These activities would not cause any physical impacts on the environment and are thus not a "Project" under CEQA. (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No
- e. Other. Explain why proposed activities would not cause any physical impacts on the environment and are thus not a "Project" under CEQA. DO NOT complete ITEMS 4 – 10
- This project is to conduct environmental analysis and review (NEPA) for a proposed staging area and will not include any ground disturbing activities requiring CEQA.

ITEM 4 - Impact of this Project on Wetlands

ITEM 5 - Cumulative Impacts of this Project

ITEM 6 - Soil Impacts

ITEM 7 - Damage to Scenic Resources

ITEM 8 - Hazardous Materials

Is the proposed Project Area located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code (hazardous materials)? (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, describe the location of the hazard relative to the Project site, the level of hazard and the measures to be taken to minimize or avoid the hazards.

ITEM 9 - Potential for Adverse Impacts to Historical or Cultural Resources

Would the proposed Project have potential for any substantial adverse impacts to historical or cultural resources? (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No

Discuss the potential for the proposed Project to have any substantial adverse impacts to historical or cultural resources.

ITEM 10 - Indirect Significant Impacts

CEQA/NEPA Attachment

Planning Project Criteria

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1. Project Cost Estimate - Q 1. (Auto populates from Cost Estimate)

1. As calculated on the Project Cost Estimate, the percentage of the Project costs covered by the Applicant is 0

(Note: This field will auto-populate once the Cost Estimate and Evaluation Criteria are Validated.) (Please select one from list)

☐ 76% or more (10 points)

☐ 51% - 75% (5 points)

☐ 26% - 50% (3 points)

☒ 25% (Match minimum) (No points)

2. Planning Project - Q 2.

A Planning Project - Page 1

2. The Planning Project would address the following 4

(Check all that apply) (Please select applicable values)

☒ Potential effects of OHV Recreation on special-status species habitats

☒ Potential effects of OHV Recreation on cultural resources

☒ Potential effects of OHV Recreation on soil conditions

☒ Potential effects of OHV Recreation on water quality

☒ Potential effects of OHV Recreation on other recreation uses

☒ Potential effects of OHV Recreation on adjacent lands.

☒ Potential impact to relationships between OHV Recreation and local residents

☐ Toxic or hazardous materials within a Project Area or adjacent property that may impact OHV Recreation

☒ Trail issues such as traffic patterns, trails closures, appropriate uses, etc.

B. Planning Project - Page 2

Explain each statement that was checked

Potential effects on special habitats would be addressed in the biological assessment/evaluation. Potential effects on cultural resources would be addressed in the archaeology report, soil/hydrology would be addressed in the hydrology/soils report, and the recreation specialist would provide input on potential effects to other recreation uses. Public scoping would address local residents and adjacent land owners issues, and engineering would address traffic/trails potential issues.

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

☒ 6 or more items checked (4 points)

☐ 4 to 5 items checked (3 points)

☐ 2 to 3 items checked (2 points)

☐ 1 or no items checked (No points)

3. Motorized Access - Q 3.

3. The Project would lead to improved facilities that provide motorized access to the following nonmotorized recreation opportunities 6

(Check all that apply) Scoring: 2 points each, up to a maximum of 6 points (Please select applicable values)

☒ Camping

☒ Birding

☒ Hiking

☐ Equestrian trails

☐ Fishing

☐ Rock Climbing

☐ Other (Specify)

4. Public Input - Q 4.

4. The Project proposal was developed with public input employing the following 2

(Check all that apply) Scoring: Maximum of 2 points (Please select applicable values)

- ☐ Publicly noticed meeting(s) with the general public to discuss Project (1 point)
☒ Conference call(s) with interested parties (1 point)
☒ Meeting(s) with stakeholders (1 point)

Explain each statement that was checked

Internal review (ID team) meetings and subsequent conference calls were held to discuss potential alternatives to the Miller Canyon Staging Area Assessment. In the past, meetings have taken place with Forest Service specialists, recreation personnel, San Bernardino National Forest Association OHV volunteers, and (adjacent landowner state park employees).

5. Stakeholder Input - Q 5.

5. If the Project were approved, the planning process would incorporate substantial stakeholder input: 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☐ No (No points) ☒ Yes (5 points)

If 'Yes', explain, specifically, how it would be 'substantial'. Identify stakeholders

Public scoping will include public meetings and mailings to private and public entities. This project will be posted on public record. Our NEPA process mandates that we address public input and include it in the decision process (where appropriate).

6. Utilization of Partnerships - Q 6.

6. The Project will utilize partnerships to successfully accomplish the Project. The number of partner organizations that will participate in the Project are 4

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☒ 4 or more (4 points) ☐ 2 to 3 (2 points)
☐ 1 (1 point) ☐ None (No points)

List partner organization(s)

SBNFA OHV staff and volunteers will assist the Forest in scoping meetings and organizing fuel reduction crews. Fuel reduction crews are county employees who are paid for with ARRA (American Reinvestment Recovery Act) and will be used as a match for this project. We plan to ask adjacent state landowners "Pilot Rock" work camp to also assist with any necessary fuel reduction projects to assist in heritage surveys. Several SBNF OHV volunteers have been trained to identify heritage sites and concerns and may also be used in initial surveys.

7. Sustain OHV Opportunity - Q 7.

7. The Planning Project sustains OHV Opportunity in the following manner 10

(Check all that apply) (Please select applicable values)

- ☒ Project will develop management plans for existing OHV Opportunity (4 points)
☒ Project will complete environmental review for an OHV Development Project (3 points)
☒ Project supports development of OHV Opportunities adjacent to population centers (3 points)
☐ Project supports development of OHV Opportunities in areas that lack legal OHV Opportunity (2 points)
☐ Project will develop a system of designated OHV routes for an existing OHV Opportunity (2 points)

Explain each statement that was checked

This project will analyze the current effects on a user created OHV staging area and explore alternatives (including alternative sites). It will complete an environmental assessment and subsequent management plan for Miller Canyon OHV use which will potentially lead to the designation of the current or alternate staging area site. Once a site is designated, it can be further developed to enhance user opportunity. Although there are currently existing legal OHV trails in this vicinity, there are no current authorized staging areas. This project has the ability to authorize the creation of a legal staging area on the SBNF, thus expanding the development of OHV opportunities adjacent to the communities of Crestline, Hesperia, Summit Valley, and Valley of Enchantment, as well as local mountain and visiting user groups where there are currently not a lot of legal staging areas available.

8. Identification of Funding Sources - Q 8.

8. Funds for implementing the completed plan have been identified 0

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

☒ No (No points)

☐ Yes (5 points)

Explain 'Yes' response

Reference Document

9. Offsite Impacts - Q 9.

9. The Planning Project would address offsite impacts relative to the Project Area (e.g., sound, fugitive dust, runoff): 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

☐ No (No points)

☒ Yes (5 points)

Explain 'Yes' response

Environmental factors considered including dust and runoff would be addressed in the soils/hydrology and air quality report. Sound would be addressed in the biological and environmental analysis.